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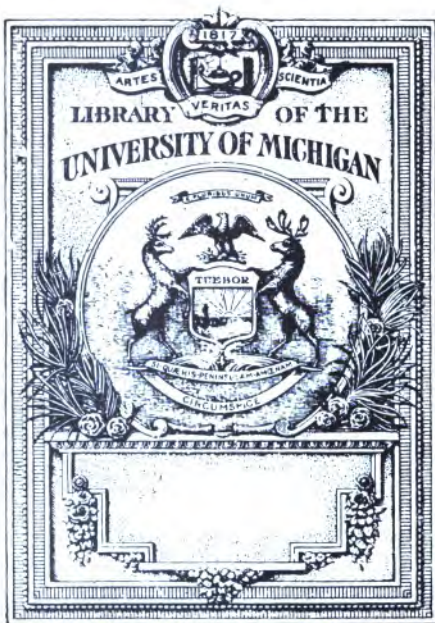
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writing ^{above} observe it. So far
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it now seems to lack the early sym-
bols of the superscription above.

THE HOUSE OF UNFULFILLED DESIRE

HARLAN P. ROWE



BOSTON
RICHARD G. BADGER
THE GORHAM PRESS
1911



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THE HOUSE OF UNFULFILLED DESIRE

IT was a small clap-board shanty set close up beside the gravel walk in the rear of the red blacksmith shop. It was less than sixteen feet long, and not as wide, but within its walls it contained such a curiously assorted collection of odds and ends as is only to be found in the place where a community is wont to go for its little odd jobs of repairing that are beyond the scope of the ingenuity of the good man of the house.

A broken sewing machine gathered dust in one corner, its enforced sojourn turned to advantage by making it the resting place for a number of dismembered clocks. Beside it was a miniature steam engine with sundry parts missing. Bicycles in all stages of dilapidation were stacked together against the walls; their various parts, in process of repair, hanging from the rafters or lying among the litter of tools on the work-bench that was built along one wall. At one end of the work-bench, set apart from the confused heap of bolts and wrenches and miscellaneous odds and ends were the partly-completed models of a wind-mill, a wagon jack and a queerly constructed farm-yard gate.

Across the rafters overhead lay a nonde-

script assortment of umbrellas and fishing rods and guns. These last were a curious collection: There was a needle gun, brought back by some argonaut of '49; and a ponderous turkey rifle, its barrel, two inches thick, crudely fashioned by some pioneer blacksmith; and lying close beside it a curious side-lock rifle, rusty from long disuse, and with a broken stock. There was also a musket of early civil war days, and an ancient flint-lock, so long that it bridged three rafters. But not one of these bore any tarnished mounting to plead for it with a veiled suggestion of mystery or romance and there was not on any the trace of an half obliterated inscription to be deciphered with enkindling eye. They were the plain weapons of plain men and as their day of usefulness was past they had been laid aside and in natural course had come to gather dust on the grimy rafters of the little shop, up out of the way.

The walls of the shop were covered with a multitude of highly colored advertising lithographs. Its furniture consisted of the long work-bench, a stove, two chairs and a cobbler's bench, heaped with tools, that was set beside the window that looked out upon the street.

Two tenants divided the proprietorship of the shop between them, each carrying on his business separate from the other. Robert, a huge bulk of a man, whose rugged features and fierce military moustache were softened

and robbed of their sternness by a pair of dreamy brown eyes, worked at the long bench, pottering over his repairing or among his models, and at the cobbler's bench Dad Begg sat, hunched over, pegging shoes.

Dad Begg was short and grizzled and old. There were wrinkles about his eyes, and wrinkles and seams were hidden beneath his bushy whiskers. The few teeth that he had were blackened stubs that were not pleasant to see when he laughed, which was often, and he wore huge, steel rimmed spectacles. It was his eyes, which looked out from behind these, which were his saving grace, for within them dwelt youth, inexhaustible.

Dad Begg, for that was the only name by which he was known in the community, slept and did his light house-keeping in a tiny lean-to built along one side of the shop, as he had neither kith nor kin. In a little garden in the rear he raised the vegetables that supplied his simple wants,—and a bed of flowers. But most of his waking hours were spent at the cobbler's bench beside the window that looked out upon the street. Here the world came to him and was served, and as mankind makes no footwear so perfect but that sooner or later there is need of the cobbler's offices there was seldom a time through the hours of the day when the chair before his bench was not occupied by someone, either man or woman or child.

There is a fascination in watching a skillful cobbler at his work: the deft stroke of

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gravely, albeit there was a twinkle in his eye, "I am glad that I came. I have made the acquaintance of the master of the house of unfulfilled desire."

Dad Begg was puzzled. "Now what in pot d'you suppose he meant by that, Robert?" he asked when the stranger had gone and the group had scattered to its several supper tables.

"D'no," said Robert, squinting critically at one of the models.

And as it was nearing the supper hour Dad Begg dismissed the subject from his mind for matters of more immediate importance.

"Robert," he said, resting from his work and pushing back his spectacles, "Don't you think its about quittin' time? The woman most likely is waitin' for you now."

Robert paused in his work and looked up and rubbed his nose with thoughtful deliberation. "Maybe so, maybe so," he said. "Leastwise I'll just finish this."

But Dad Begg was not so to be put off.

"Here's the woman's shoes she told you to bring home," he added insistently, holding out a pair of broad, low heeled buskins.

Robert took them and placed them on the bench beside him and turned again to his model.

Dad Begg's eyes danced quizzically from the man to the model in front of him.

"How's it comin', Robert?" he queried.

"Oh, just so, just so," said Robert with

more enthusiasm than he had before shown. "They ain't going to catch me this time. Here, look here," and he turned a wheel, making the machine revolve slowly.

But Dad Begg concluded that time had come for action. "Here's your hat, Robert," he said picking it up from the floor where it lay. "Now you better hustle if you want any supper." And Robert, expostulating mildly took the hat and walked out of the shop.

Dad Begg gave a final resounding blow with his hammer to the shoe he was mending and took it from the last and tossed it on the pile at his feet. He rose, stretched himself and took off his spectacles. As he did so his eyes rested on the work-bench.

"Well, I declare," he exclaimed; "If he ain't went and forgot Elmina's shoes after all."

He chuckled to himself over this discovery as he lighted the lamp and stood for a moment fumbling for the hidden button which fastened the belt of his apron.

His eyes, freed at last from the concentration his work demanded, roamed about the room, resting here and there on some favorite picture; an alluring house-hold scene, an impossible landscape, a farm-yard populous with sleek, spirited animals,—all of them ostentatiously setting forth the wares the lithograph advertised.

The button was found at last. He unfastened the strap and drew off his apron, and

picking up the lamp went out into the leanto to prepare his evening meal, which, when it was ready, he sat down alone to eat.

He had but just begun when there came a rap at the shop door. He rose from the table and went to the door and opened it and a child trudged in carrying a tin pail. He followed Dad Begg into the leanto and the cobbler took the pail from him and set it on the table. Then, with a twinkle dancing in his eye he sat down to his meal again and began eating in silence.

The child waited, and the expectant gaze with which he had at first regarded Dad Begg changed to a look of perplexity and then of doubt.

Then Dad Begg suddenly looked up. His eyes rested upon the child and he arched his shaggy brows in simulated surprise.

"Eh, Oh, you here. Well I declare," he said. "Hungry too I suppose." He pushed back his chair and bustled about as if to make amends for his rudeness. He brought out a bowl and a spoon from the cupboard and set them on the table. Then he drew up a chair with a box upon it and lifted the child in his arms and set him up to the table beside him, and so, in company, they finished the meal, chatting together as they ate.

After it was over Dad Begg tied a gingham apron upon the child, who, apparently taking it as very much a matter of course at once set about helping to clear the table and then to wash and put away the dishes, climb-

ing up on a chair to set them on the cupboard shelves.

This work at last finished to their mutual satisfaction the two went out into the shop. Dad Begg drew up a chair before the stove and lifted the youngster on his knee.

"Now tell stories, Dad Begg," said the child. And then at last under the spell of the cobbler's voice speaking to a child, things in the shop became as they should be if this were a world of dreams: The weapons up on the grimy rafters assumed the trappings which the day denied, the sewing machine and the miniature steam engine hummed cheerily and Robert's models on the long bench worked smoothly and well, and over in the corner where the argumentative group held forth the gloom was peopled with splendid, heroic figures; until the child's eyes grew heavy and he fell asleep.

The cobbler rose gently with his burden. He picked up the shoes from the bench where Robert had left them and then he went out into the night and down the village street.

At the door of the child's home he gave him, still sleeping, into the arms of his mother, and set the shoes on the sill.

She smiled. "Massy me what would we ever do without you Dad Begg," she said. "He does set such store on carrying the milk to you."

But these words were lost on Dad Begg, who was already out of the gate and down

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the street, whistling an old tune as he went. And he was still whistling when he reached the shop door and opened it and went inside, and afterward, until the light in the leanto went out and the shanty in the rear of the red blacksmith shop lay in darkness as Dad Begg laid him down to sleep.

PEGGY

THE first volume of Peggy's book of life was closed when she came from the Intelligence office to be a servant in the Haskells' home. Peggy remembered its beginning, twenty years before, in a hut among the mountains on the banks of a Norwegian fjord chiefly because of another event which had made the year a memorable one in her family calendar.

One morning, shortly after her birth, Peggy's father, Olaf Swanskold, shouldered the bundle containing his few necessities of life and swung down the path to the fjord, going out to try issue with the forces of the new world across the sea. And the new world in her lust for new vigor had taken him to herself and made him her own and the hut in Norway did not know him any more.

He drifted about from place to place and as time passed his letters came more and more infrequent. Such letters as he did write spoke mostly of his unintelligible amusements and the new friends and acquaintances he was making; containing few items of interest about himself and less thought for those to whom they were written. Then finally they ceased altogether and no news came of him.

The family in the hut by the fjord was

left to exist as best it might on the fruits of the little plot of ground and the spoils wrung from the mountains and the fjord.

"It was the mother who brought us up through our childhood," said Peggy to Mrs. Haskell in her quaint broken English.

"She fed us and clothed us and saw that we had something of an education until we were old enough to go out and make our own way."

Then they went out to service in the neighboring villages,—all but Peggy.

She also prepared to leave the hut and earn her own living when she felt that she had completed her meagre education, and she put the subject to her mother as they were sitting one evening before the hut in the twilight after the work of the day was over. It was a custom of theirs to sit thus for a few minutes each pleasant evening, passing the interval in silence, Peggy wrapt in the wonder of the sunset, and her mother beside her, rough hands folded in her lap and her heavy stolid figure relaxed in rest, gazing out with expressionless eyes upon the fjord.

"Mother," said Peggy breaking the silence, "I think I shall go away, out to service. I am old enough so that I must not be a care upon you any longer."

Her mother turned and looked down at her. Over the coarse features there passed an intensely human expression of love and wistfulness that banished all the stolid plac-

idity from them. She reached over and laid her hand shyly upon Peggy's head.

"No, child," she said, "You must not go away from me. I am getting old. I feel it, and I have great need of you Christina"—for the name Peggy was an acquisition of the new world—"and besides," she spoke with painful slowness, "You are much more like your father than Olaf and Hans. Have you never been told so?"

The last words were instant and surprising in their effect upon Peggy. They caused her to remain staring at her mother in open-eyed amazement for several seconds, and dismissed all thought of the subject in hand from her mind. It was the first time in Peggy's recollection that her mother had of her own will spoken to her about the father she could not remember.

Her mother's silence upon this subject had been one of the troubles of Peggy's girlhood; for her father had been a frequent subject of her thoughts since she was old enough to be allowed to go off by herself on rambles among the ravines or to paddle her own boat through the bays of the great fjord. From casual descriptions she had gleaned here and there she had formed a satisfying image of him for herself as a great fearless blond giant, loving and loveable and altogether to be revered, who was being kept away from her mother and the home by some mysterious, powerful force. She never gave up the belief that sometime

she would see him and she even pictured to herself the home-coming there would be some day. But at these moments there would rise the thought of her mother, whose face took on an expressionless blankness and who at once turned the subject whenever Peggy mentioned her father's name. It was an attitude Peggy could not understand and it caused all the years of her youth to be permeated by a pain she could not fathom, robbing her girlish sorrow for the absence of the parent of the easement it otherwise would have found.

Now, all at once, she knew that secretly her mother grieved also, and the doubts and misgivings of the past years were swept away. It left her stunned and bewildered. She sat trying to collect her thoughts until her mother rose and went into the hut and Peggy heard her making ready for bed. Then she rose to her feet, and, slipping out from the shadow of the hut, she ran silently down the path to the fjord. She untied her boat and pushed out upon the black surface of the water. She let the boat drift as she sat with her hands clasped in her lap staring into the night, deep in her girlish dreams, floundering through years of disconnected thinking, gathering up the loose ends of impulses and subconsciously weaving them into one continuous whole, for at last she was free to pursue her dreams to their wildest, happiest conclusion. So it came that a resolution was born as she rowed back to the

landing just as the gray dawn came creeping down from the mountains; a resolution that was to supply the motive for which her life waited.

As the days passed this resolution grew and took on definite shape. She fed it by observing her mother in her slow toil about the house and the garden. It became a plan which Peggy bolstered up and strove to make practical in every way that she could devise. And the plan became a tangible thing when, one day, a letter came from an uncle who lately had seen her father and had talked with him.

That evening Peggy again ventured to break the silence as the two of them sat in the twilight before the hut. She spoke in words which she did her best to make quiet and matter of fact.

"Mother," she said, "I am going away. You must plan to do without me for a little while. I am going to America to get father and bring him back with me."

Her mother gazed at her as if she did not at first comprehend what Peggy had said. Then as understanding came her features contracted an instant in a spasm of pain. She seized Peggy's hand as if by the act she could restrain her. "No, no, you are not going away from me," she said in a low, hard voice. "One is enough, enough! You must not go. You are all that is left child."

"Then will you go with me, mother?" said Peggy, a new hope springing up in her

breast.

But the woman shook her head, slowly, hopelessly it seemed.

"No," she answered, "I am too old, I cannot go. My place is here, for the rest of my few days. His, is there. But you must not go away from me. That cannot be a good country or it would have given him back to me. I will not let you go. I need you. Wait; it is not long. Stay with me until Swan comes."

Tears came into Peggy's eyes. But her resolution was very firmly grounded, for she had dwelt with it until it appeared in the light of an act of consecration to which her life was worth giving.

"Hush, mother! It is not so hard as you think," she said. "I am not going to stay, and think how happy we will be with father at home.

"And you must not talk to me of Swan," she added, "for I am not ready to think of marriage. I do like Swan, but—perhaps—somewhere there is one I will like better."

So Peggy settled the question in her own positive way to the satisfaction of her sense of the fitness of things and a few weeks later she sailed for America, and Swan Carlstrom, a young mechanic from her home village stood beside Peggy's mother and brothers as she said her farewells at the wharf and took a self-conscious part in the leave taking.

One afternoon two weeks later Peggy was

seated on a worn plush sofa in the parlor of a dingy boarding house beside the railway yards in a western city awaiting the first meeting with her father. Her few belongings were stacked by the door in the narrow hallway where the drayman had left them.

Peggy was weary from the long journey, but the stimulus of the constant succession of new scenes was still with her and she gazed about her with eyes lively with interest and gave stare for stare with the inquisitive land-lady who now and then intruded her head through the door-way. Knowledge that her quest was so near its end, however, made the interval before the sound of the six o'clock whistles seem longer to her than the whole time her journey had taken. But even this wait was nothing compared to that after the din of whistles and booming clocks had ceased until heavy steps sounded on the board walk and across the narrow porch. She heard the door open and the sound of a man's voice answering the landlady as she told him that a lady waited in the parlor to see him.

Peggy rose. The door of the room opened and for the first time in her twenty years of life she stood face to face with her father.

For an instant neither of them spoke, but stood gazing silently at each other. Peggy was the first to recover herself. With a murmured cry, "Father!" she flung her arms around his neck.

The one to whom Peggy thus owned filial

allegiance was not a figure who would have excited more than passing notice in a crowd! He was a huge big-framed man, it is true, but he was dressed in the coarse garb of a working-man and in one hand he carried a dinner-pail and in the other clutched a ragged felt hat and his smouldering pipe. He received Peggy's caresses in manifest embarrassment.

Peggy had proofs enough, however, to dispel any skepticism he may have felt as to the relationship she claimed and later in the evening when the two were seated in the parlor which the landlady had obligingly turned over to them he talked freely of home and asked with an awkward attempt at interest after her mother and the boys.

That gave Peggy the opening for which she waited and she summoned up all the enthusiasm of her mission and flung it into her words as she exclaimed: "Father, I have come to take you back home with me, to mother and the boys and all the others there who love you. We need you very much and mother—mother wants you to come!"

Olaf listened to her in astonishment. When she had finished he was silent a moment until he had mastered what she said. Then he spoke in answer to her last words. "If she wants me why did she not come with you?" he said.

Peggy's eyes grew soft as she remembered her mother and her slow labor about the house and garden.

"Mother has had to work very hard," she said. "She is getting old and she will not leave the old home and the boys and everything there that she has always known. It is too much to ask of her, father."

Olaf shook his head decidedly.

"No," he said, "I will not go."

"Why?" he added in response to Peggy's appalled questioning gaze. "Oh, you wait and see. This is a great country. You do not know it yet. Everyone here is free. There is much money and much pleasure and much to see and one does not have to work all the time, like we did there. You will understand when you have seen it as I have."

With those words he dismissed the subject and in the days that followed Peggy brought the first volume of her book of life to a close; for notwithstanding his boast of the money to be had in America he had not gathered much of it since his arrival and he positively declined to set up an establishment with Peggy as its mistress.

"You must go out and earn your own living," he said to her. "It is the way the women do in this country. They are free like the men."

As Peggy's money was running low there remained nothing but to follow this advice, and as house work was all she knew she went out to work as a servant and Providence sent her into the Haskell home.

The weeks that followed were full of revelations which rocked Peggy's life on its

foundations. She soon gained an indifferent mastery of the new language. She learned the various uses of electricity and was dazzled by a standard of living of which she had not dreamed. As she became more sure of herself she went about in the city and made new friends and acquaintances and tasted the pleasures and the amusements which are offered the dwellers in cities.

One day Mrs. Haskell, going into the kitchen on an errand, found her sobbing beside the kitchen table, upon which two letters lay open.

"What is it Peggy?" asked Mrs. Haskell laying her arm over the girl's shoulders.

Peggy looked up through her tears.

"It is mother and Swan," she said. "They want me to come home; and oh Mrs. Haskell I do not want to go! It is all so beautiful and fine here. I love it. I never dreamed God had made such a beautiful world. I cannot go back."

Mrs. Haskell was a woman who knew life and the world, and above all else, save her husband and her God, she loved the out-of-doors.

"Hush Peggy," she said! "You must not say such things. God has made a very beautiful world, but he has made nothing more perfect or more beautiful than your own mountains and the love of your mother and Swan."

But the tide of the new life was running strong within Peggy and she shook her head

dismally, and when Mrs. Haskell had gone out she wrote temporizing answers to the two letters and set herself joyfully to work to learn the new world's ways and make them her own.

As if to vindicate her choice her father came to her a few days later and gave her a part of his wages to keep for him, saying that he had decided to pay a visit to the home in Norway as soon as he should be able.

"I must go like a gentleman," he said in explaining his reasons for delay. And then he added decidedly. "But I will not stay. I will come back."

However, Peggy was hopeful that in the end he would change his mind. The more so because after this he brought the money quite regularly and seemed to delight in talking over with her the plans for the return.

The Haskells spent that summer in the North Channel, and they took Peggy with them.

The trip among the islands to the little bay whose shore was to be their camping site was made in the night. When Peggy came on deck in the morning the yacht lay at anchor beneath an overhanging cliff. On all sides the bay was enclosed by a wilderness of rocks and scrub growth rising steeply away from the water. Further back were clumps of gloomy pine, and beyond, like a background, shutting them from the outer world rose the long jagged crests of the

Cloche mountains.

Standing bare headed in the morning sunshine Peggy stared about her in silent amazement. It was beyond the range of her comprehension that anywhere in the world outside of Norway there had been such a landscape created. She leaned over the rail drinking in the scene with her whole soul; then, with a homing cry that in the human language has no words, she burst into tears.

The days which followed were all too short for her to get into them all her joy of living. From morning until night the camp was filled with her merry voice, and her laughter echoed among the rocks and through the fastnesses of the pine. The nights were nights of enchantment. When the embers of the camp-fire burned low and Mrs. Haskell sat in silence by her husband's side and trembled with the immensity of the universe there would come a gentle crunching on the shore, down where the boats were moored, and through the night the sound of the dip of a paddle and the black shadow of a boat with a single occupant would drift out upon the surface of the bay. It was Peggy, going to keep her tryst with the spirit of the fjords.

And then, in the fullness of the summer days, romance came into Peggy's life, filling it and making that summer complete.

Romance in the person of Joe Caravieu, a young French-Canadian, mate on the lumber barge which made bi-weekly trips between the

city and the cluster of saw mills at Lost River, a few miles from the Haskells' camp.

Peggy met him at a lumbermen's dance, to which the Haskells, drawn by curiosity, had taken her. Joe Caravieu's bearing and manners and air of subtle deference captivated her at once. They were different from anything she had ever known, as were the trimmings of his uniform jacket and his natty officer's cap with the letters of his rank on the front in gold braid.

Joe Caravieu paid court at once, for Peggy was good looking and bright and vivacious in her quaint foreign way. His impulsive ardor, so like that of the heroes in the stories her new found girl friends in the city had taught her to read, and the plays she had seen, made it a quick and thorough conquest. Peggy felt herself borne up and carried, but half resisting, on the crest of his torrent of devotion.

Mrs. Haskell was not long in understanding the situation. She had no faith in Joe Caravieu, and as she had come to be very fond of Peggy she took the matter to her husband, and he, to Peggy, who answered with a toss of her flaxen head and was off that evening to meet Joe Caravieu at the outskirts of Lost River and tell him what had passed.

So the summer days passed on wings of light. When Joe's boat was in port the two spent golden hours in rambles among the rocks, with intervals of rest and confidences in the shadows of the pine. They sailed and

rowed together and spent many afternoons side by side fishing for bass and muskellunge.

At evening, when the supper dishes were washed and put away Peggy was wont to slip out among the tents and away, speeding down the aisles of the forest to join her lover. She was only a child in her knowledge of the ways of the world, and there was no reservation in the gift she gave.

In that way the summer wore on to its close, and as August merged into September the Haskell's prepared to break camp and go back to the city.

In the early morning of that last day Peggy stood on the point at the mouth of the bay and watched Joe's boat as it steamed slowly by and grew smaller in the distance; and that evening as they sat around the last camp-fire waiting for the full harvest moon to come up from behind one of the rugged crests of the Cloche, Peggy drew Mrs. Haskell to one side and blushing beneath the cover of the darkness told her love story.

"We are to be married next month, Joe says", she finished, her eyes sparkling with happiness.

Mrs. Haskell smiled through eyes that were a trifle misty and patted Peggy's flaxen head.

"I could not say anything to spoil it." She said afterward to her husband. "I felt that perhaps, after all, Peggy might be right and we wrong."

The next morning they broke camp and in

a few days they were back in the city again. And that autumn Peggy wrote the last chapter in the second volume of her book of life and closed it and laid it away beside the first.

She saw Joe Caravieu several times. But the meetings were far from being sources of satisfaction to her. Joe laughingly advised her to take plenty of time in her preparations for the wedding, and something told her that his caresses lacked something that was in them when they were together in the summer. Mr. Haskell began some delayed investigations, but before he had completed them Peggy came to Mrs. Haskell one day in the study and her face was white and drawn.

"It is Joe Caravieu," she said as she fell on her knees and buried her face in Mrs. Haskell's lap.

"He is married! The girls have taken me to see his wife, and they have children", and with a moan Peggy hid her face.

Mrs. Haskell looked down upon her with eyes of pity.

"Poor little Peggy," she murmured as she stroked the girl's hair, "poor little Peggy!"

And when the first tempest of Peggy's grief and shame were spent and she was silent in utter weariness, Mrs. Haskell gently lifted her up.

"Peggy", she said. "Have you told your father about it?"

Peggy shuddered. "Yes," she said. "I told

him. Oh, Mrs. Haskell he laughed at me and called me names. He told me I was a fool and to give him back his money, because I did not know anything."

At those words the tears came into Mrs. Haskell's eyes and she bent over Peggy in sorrow. She knew that out in the world which Peggy had adopted there were many who would laugh and call her names.

Which was true! Until at last Peggy drew away from the erstwhile friends and acquaintances in broken hearted terror and came to dwell within herself, awake at last to the realization that the world outside could not and would not enter with her into her chamber of sorrow.

And on the day when Peggy became a woman; for always the price of such understanding is youth, two letters came into the kitchen of the Haskell home and Mrs. Haskell, as once before, found Peggy sobbing beside the table. The two letters were open before her and upon the pages was lying a foreign money order.

Mrs. Haskell understood. Gently she raised the girl's tear stained face and looked into it and then she stooped and kissed little Peggy. "You are going back," she said.

And Peggy looked up with a glad light of love in her eyes and answered, "Yes".

THE RELAY

IN one corner of the long, low, covered stand a band was playing. It was march music and like the roll of drums came the sound of many feet beating time. Across the mass of summer gowns and flannels, that rose, tier above tier, almost to the grimy rafters fluttered innumerable vividly colored banners, and at intervals bursts of song and cheering rang out.

The straightaway of a cinder track stretched past the front of the stand. Opposite, on the grassy oval which the track enclosed, many lean looking, brown legged men in white running trunks and jerseys stood about in groups or lay at full length on the grass, basking in the sunlight. Others stalked back and forth, swathed like Indians in gaudy blanket robes.

A group of men who had been consulting together in front of the stand broke up. Some of them hurried off across the track. One of those remaining raised a megaphone to his lips and faced the stand. The band stopped playing and the hum of conversation hushed.

"Everybody out for the two-mile", he called, and, after a pause, "Get your men ready for the relay!"

The words could be heard in the dressing rooms behind the stand. Before their sound

had died away several little groups of blanketed figures were making their way out toward the track, each surrounded by its knot of supporters.

Hoarsely above the confusion of desultory cheering came the second call, the first summons for the relay. As it penetrated into one of the dressing rooms the gloom deepened on the faces of a group lounging about on rubbing tables and benches.

"When did it come" asked a pale faced boy who had just entered from the track, clinging weakly to the shoulders of two supporters.

"About an hour ago," replied the one whom he had interrupted. "We had just come out of the hotel to get into the bus when a messenger boy came up and handed it to him. He gave it to us after he had read it. All it said was: 'Father dying. Come at once'. Of course we were both of us so knocked out we couldn't say anything. We went right over to the telegraph office to see that there was no fake about it, and then he hurried back to the hotel and packed his grip and just had time to catch his train. He felt all broken up about going and leaving us in the lurch like that, but I told him we could manage it somehow. I guess it's rather up to us now," he added gloomily.

"What's the matter boys?" Queried a jolly faced old gentleman standing by the door, who had overhead the last part of this speech.

"Plenty," answered one of them from the depths of his blanket robe: "The man who runs third quarter in the relay has just got a telegram that his father is dying and he has gone home."

"Too bad, too bad," murmured the old gentleman. "But can you not put someone in his place," he added with a flash of inspiration.

Those who overheard this sage observation grinned with all the indulgence youth has for age.

"Of course we'll have to do that," the one who had answered his first question explained." But that doesn't help matters much. You see we haven't anyone nearly as fit."

The discouraged words found reflection in the faces about the dressing room. The relay was the chief event of the meet. For it, alone, a cup was offered. Two years this cup had stood secure on a shelf in the trophy room of Crane University "gym", a tribute to the prowess of the quartet of quarter-milers she had sent each year to represent her at the intercollegiate. If the relay could be won this year the cup would go back again to Crane, but this time to remain, free to accumulate the dust and tradition of a perpetual residence, undisturbed save as some undergraduate of the future should point out its ancient figure to his admiring auditors "from home" as he recounted the legends which clustered about it.

That a few fateful words had snatched this prospect away just as it was about to become a reality, was the cause of the gloom on the faces of the little gathering of Crane men in the dressing-room.

Hallowell, the captain of the team, had brought the intelligence. He had been with his team mate when he received the telegram, and although he said nothing about it in his gloomy recital, had dragged him by main force back to the hotel and packed his suit case and hurried him down to the station to catch his train. Not that he, himself, did not fully realize all that putting in a new man on the eve of the race involved, or forget his cherished hope of presenting the relay cup to Crane as the last, and crowning, achievement of his four years career in college athletics. But even for Hallowell life already had presented greater problems than those involved in the leadership of track teams and the ability to do a quarter under fifty. He had not hesitated in his decision, and now that Torrence, the third quarter man, had gone he set himself resolutely to face the consequences.

Even as he sat in earnest conversation with Callahan, the trainer, the crack of a revolver sounded on the summer air.

"There go the two milers" he said grimly. "We're next."

"I think it will have to be Hart, don't you", he added.

Callahan nodded.

Just outside the door of the dressing-room

the group who had heard Hallowell's story gathered to discuss the situation.

"Hart seems to be the only man available," said one, "but no one knows anything about him, or what he can do. Hart is a sophomore," he went on to explain to some to whom the name was unfamiliar. "He's a kind of queer duffer. He apparently doesn't care to have much to do with the rest of us. When he was a freshman he never came to a class meeting or tried for any of the teams. He just pegged along by himself, never doing any particularly bright work in his classes, nor, so far as I can find out, anything outside of college to support himself; just a sort of nil.

"He started out the same way this year, so it was the greatest surprise on the campus when he came up on the running track in the gym one afternoon at the beginning of the second semester and joined the running squad. Gad, but he was awkward. That didn't phase him though. The guying he got slipped off him like water off a duck; he didn't seem to pay any more attention to it than he did to us. And now here's the moral, dears," said the youth oracularly: "Hart and those long legs of his kept plugging along until, behold, about ten days ago in the try out for the relay team he got sixth place. Then luck took a hand; Langdon, the fifth man, strained a tendon and Hart went to sub. Now Torrence has had to go home and it seems to be up to our unknown to run

third quarter. I tell you there's something in it."

"Yes, probably", grunted a listener, "he ran so well in the try-out, got all of sixth place".

"Shut up" broke in another savagely, "here he comes now."

A tall, thin, angular youth was striding across the grass from the direction of the stand. He walked with shoulders slightly stooped, covering the ground with a loose, ungainly swing. From under his slouch hat peeped a shock of sandy hair. His face was freckled. He had a good mouth and jaw and a pair of purposeful hazel eyes that somehow appeared just a trifle sleepy. He nodded carelessly to the group by the door and entered.

"Temple said you wanted to see me?" He said questioningly as he approached Hallowell and Callahan.

The latter nodded to Hallowell, who said, "Hart, Torrance has been called home suddenly. You will have to run third quarter in the relay."

Hart stood speechless. Evidently such a contingency never had occurred to him. He shifted uneasily, then, raising his eyes appealingly to Callahan he said, still addressing Hallowell: "Couldn't some one else run it better than I, captain?"

Now, there is a limit to every man's courageous adjustment to adversities. Hallowell had reached that limit. He turned to

Hart sharply. "Are you going to be a quitter?" He asked in a hard voice.

But before Callahan or Hart had time to reply he slipped down from the table on which he was sitting and grasped Hart's hand. "I beg your pardon, old man," he said. "I know it rather took you off your feet; it did all of us; but go in and do your best. The cup is not lost yet by a long way."

Hart's face was crimson with embarrassment. He stammered something to the effect that he would try and hurried out with Callahan for a few words of instruction and a hasty change of clothes.

Hallowell wrapped his blanket about him and laid down for a moment's rest. Hardly had he done so, it seemed to him, when the voice of the megaphone sounded from the track announcing the result of the two mile.

After the tumult of cheering had subsided the hoarse cry sounded again: "E-e-very-body out for the relay!"

Hallowell rolled off the table. The rubbers gave a last pat to the legs of the other two men and they wrapped their blankets about them and joined him. They waited a moment for Hart so that when at last they emerged from the door of the dressing-room the other teams already had gone out to the track.

From the crowded stand came roar after roar of cheering. The stand seemed to tremble under the boom of stamping feet. Hallowell glanced up grimly as Callahan broke

a way for them through the crowd which lined the fence and wondered if the news had yet reached the Crane rooters.

As if in answer to his thought a fresh burst of cheering went up. He felt the crunch of cinders under his feet. They had passed the gate and were out upon the track, Callahan in the lead, striding toward a cluster of blanketed figures in the middle of the track before the stand. Hallowell called back his wandering thoughts and gathered all his coolness for the drawing for position.

In the stand one question was upon the lips of the Crane supporters: "Which is Hart?" For news of the telegram and its consequences had spread with all the swiftness of evil tidings, and along with its darkening of sanguine hopes it brought a great curiosity as to this unknown Hart.

The group on the track broke up; the cheering gradually died away, and one of the bands in the stand gathered up its instruments to play. Then as if in answer to all the queries in the stand a cry sounded, shrill and clear:—

"Hello, Dear Hart!"

A few eyes in the stand turned in the direction from which the cry came; but most of them sought out the little group of Crane runners below on the track. One of these, a tall, gaunt youth with sandy hair was staring toward the stand enquiringly,—no need to ask longer which was Hart.

Again the cry came, clear, compelling. By

this time the Crane followers realized its meaning. They took it up and rolled it from one end of the field to the other in a mighty, swelling cheer.

The effect upon the man on the track below was magical. Langdon said afterward that the sleep seemed to clear out of his eyes all in an instant. He stared at the stand a moment longer and then turned his crimson face to Hollowell and said with a catch in his voice: "I wonder how they got hold of it. It's my nickname at home."

Hollowell laid his hand on his shoulder. "It's all right old man," he said. "They're with you up there."

The good square jaw tightened. Langdon was right, the sleep had cleared out of the hazel eyes. All in an instant had come the change. The men who knew him stared in wonderment. Could this be the slow, careless Hart, this alert individual who listened so attentively to Callahan's last instructions and discussed the prospect in as cool a manner as the veteran Hollowell. Hollowell noticed the change and a glimmer of hope burned up for an instant in his breast, but he snuffed it out ruthlessly and turned his attention to the track.

The men who were to run first had flung their blanket robes to waiting hands and were stepping forward to dig their foot-holds in the cinders. A moment later and those beyond the sound of the starter's voice saw them crouch in a row as if by common im-

pulse; saw a revolver barrel glint in the sun above the starter's upstretched arm; saw the crouching figures raise and swing forward a trifle. Then a ball of fluffy smoke broke out above the starter's head. A scratching of cinders and they were off, already rounding the turn, running well bunched, steady and strong.

Down the back stretch they sped. At the two-twenty pole there were spaces opening between. On the turn these spaces widened perceptibly.

The second quarter men were waiting nervously.

Ralston of Crane was running in third place. As they swept into the straightaway he swung out and started his sprint. But the pace had been too fast. He fought gamely, but almost at the finish he staggered, and, lurching forward, blindly touched his man off, a bad third.

Callahan frowned and said something in a low voice to Hallowell, who shook his head gloomily.

"Can't do it," he said. "This quarter is going to be faster yet!"

It was! Around the turn; down the back stretch; past the two-twenty pole again. Crane still held third, but the two men behind were slowly creeping up.

Hallowell and Callahan gave Hart a few last words of encouragement and sent him out to take his place, and down from the stand surged a mighty, hopeful chant: "Eat

'em up, Dear Hart!'

Harts lips tightened, and he glanced up, smiling.

Hallowell noticed it, and he said to himself: "I wonder if I did such a fool thing after all in putting him third," and his judgment told him yes.

Around the turn and into the straightaway swung the runners. Again the colors of Crane swerved out to sprint. But this man had gauged himself better. As he bore down on Hart there was no faltering there. As he neared the finish his pace increased in a spurt that drew a burst of applause from the Crane section. He lunged forward to touch Hart, and then staggered and dropped, limp and senseless to the ground.

With a spurt of cinders Hart shot away in third place, twenty feet behind the leader. The crowd in the stand caught its breath in wonder.

"He's hitting it up too fast," muttered Callahan to Hallowell as he took his blanket robe. "He can't hold it."

That was the feeling of all those who knew, as they watched him circle the turn and swing into the back stretch at a pace that they knew from his stride must be terrific. But the stand's judgment was not expert, and over the swaying mass of humanity up there, there dawned a realization that a new runner was being born to Crane in that streak of flying humanity that seemed to be all legs. They saw the distance that separated him

from the leaders gradually shorten. At the two-twenty pole he came up even with the second man, hung beside him an instant and then slowly drew ahead.

Crane rose in a delirium of joy. Langdon pounded a gray haired professor of Greek on the back and yelled in his ear:

"Watch him! Just see him go! Can't he run!"

And the old professor, without turning his head, softly murmured, "you bet!"

Below, on the track, the knowing ones shook their heads. Eagerly they gazed at the runners for the first sign of weakening. It did not seem possible that Hart could maintain the pace; but he gradually drew away from the second man and slowly, slowly crept near the leader.

The stand was hushed and tense.

They were on the turn now; the last quarter men were in their places and waiting.

Into the straightaway swung the runners, sweeping down with great strides toward the finish. Hart was running in the middle of the track to touch Hallowell. His arms were drawn up tense at his side and his head was thrown back. His face was set and drawn. In an agony of suspense the Crane men watched for the first weakening of that sweeping stride. But it did not come. Nearer, nearer,—suddenly his hand shot out, he lurched forward and touched Hallowell three feet behind the leader.

"There goes a record", muttered one of the

timers to his companions as he clicked his watch.

Hallowell closed the gap on the back stretch. At the two-twenty pole he was well in the lead and after that the race was his.

Pandemonium broke loose in the stand as Crane awoke to a realization that the cup was won. The transition from despair to triumph brought delirium. Hats and coats and canes were flung into the air. Unable to contain themselves the spectators leaped the railing and swarmed out on the track below. The victorious four were caught up and borne on willing shoulders to the dressing rooms.

Around Hart an enthusiastic crowd clamored for introductions, but Callahan and the rubbers pushed them out and closed and fastened the door.

That evening after dinner as Hallowell walked out on the hotel veranda and stood looking down at the crowds of visitors leisurely taking their way to the trains, he heard his name called from the dusk behind him.

"You seem to be in no hurry. Wont you come over and sit down", said a voice which he recognized as Hart's.

He took the chair that was pushed forward. As he pulled his pipe from his pocket he opened his lips to repeat the words that had accompanied his warm hand clasp when the two met in the dressing room after the race. But Hart's hand fell lightly on his shoulder. "Cut it out old man," he said. "I guess I know what you were going to say,

but forget it. I owe Crane a heap more to-night than she owes me. I never realized before all that college can mean to a man."

THE BIG BURNING

WE had been berrying over on the South Branch. Father and Mother and Sister and Bub and I. We had planned to stay two or three days, but the first night Bub had been taken suddenly ill and now we were hurrying home to Father's medicine chest as fast as the lumbering oxen would go.

As we plunged into the narrow canon that marked the road through the tamarack swamp the smoky red disk of the afternoon sun swung down behind the western woods and shadows deepened in the defile ahead. The day had been suffocatingly hot. There was no breeze and the sultry air was heavy with the pungent smoke from the distant burnings. The dust rolled up in dense, choking clouds and hung over the wagon, settling wearily down after we had passed, in a gray mantle over the drooping leaves.

Mother held Bub in her arms to shield him from the dust and the flies and the jolting of the wagon as it bumped over the uneven corduroy. Frequently we stopped and Father pushed through the bushes which grew close up beside the road. We could hear him floundering away over the soft bed of the swamp, and when he came back, a moment later, the handkerchiefs which he had taken with him were dripping with water from the

stagnant pool he had found. These Mother used to bathe Bub's hot face.

Twilight had fallen when we at last topped the rise from the swamp and came out into our clearing. The stumps and dead standing timber had faded to gloomy mysterious bulks, and behind them rose the black wall of the forest.

Suddenly Sis gripped my arm. "Oh, Son, look there!" she said in a low, awed voice.

A whip-poor-will calling by the road-side hushed abruptly with a "whip" and a flutter of wings.

I looked in the direction Sis pointed. Away over the distant woods a tiny sheet of flame hung dancing and flickering against the sky. Now it died until only the glow remained, and again it reached up and leaped, beckoning like a finger, high above the trees. Then it flashed and went out and there remained only the dull red glow stretching across that part of the sky as it had for weeks past.

Mother saw the light also and she called Father's attention to it. He laughed and assured us that it was miles away on the other side of the big swamp. But that night my troubled sleep was filled with dreams of forest fires.

With the passing days Bub grew no better. All day long he seemed content to sit quietly in the cradle Father had built for him, turning over the leaves of the picture books Mother made by pasting picture cards she had brought with her from

'York state on leaves cut out from cloth flour sacks. He was no longer our frolicsome, mischievous Bub, and Father's face often became grave as he watched him.

The summer had been unusually hot and dry. The woods were like tinder and in the stump-dotted fields the stubble crackled and snapped at the touch. Every morning the red sun struggled up through a heavy, smoke-laden atmosphere, and at night sank wearily to rest in a gray cloud that for weeks past had hung above the western woods. Night did not bring darkness, for there was always that long red glow above the trees.

At every family service which Father held each Sunday afternoon in our cabin he prayed for rain. But the rain did not come. And as the days passed the smoke became more dense and penetrating, irritating our throats and smarting our eyes and causing us often to use candles in the cabin in the middle of the day.

One night early in September I was awakened by a light moving about the room and figures passing to and fro. When I had cleared the sleep out of my eyes I saw that Father and Mother were fully dressed. Mother was leaning over the cradle where Bub lay, moaning and tossing restlessly. I slipped out of bed carefully, that I might not waken Sis and went over to the cradle.

"Is he worse, Mother?" I asked.

"Yes, Son," she answered, "very much worse. Father is going to the settlement for

more medicine and to see if the new doctor has come."

Father had put on his hat and was slipping some vials from the medicine chest into his pocket. Then he came to the cradle and drew back the mosquito-net and stooped and kissed Bub.

After he had said goodby to Mother he turned to me.

"Son", he said. "If anything happens remember the root-cellar."

Ah, if anything happened!

Although Father had laughed at Mother and the rest of us for our fears he had plowed a broad belt around the clearing and had hastened the digging of the root-cellar upon which he was at work. He had just completed it and as I helped him to fill with water several barrels which we carried down into it he warned me that if ever the fire should come when he was not there, I was to see that Mother and the children were safely housed beneath its sod roof. Now, when he spoke of the root-cellar Mother shuddered and her lips moved as she looked after him when he went out of the cabin.

Through the rest of the seemingly endless night Mother and I watched over Bub, cooling his feverish body and quieting him as best we could, and listened to the rising wind moaning around the house.

At last morning came and the red sun appeared above the east slashing. As the day grew the wind, which was blowing from the

direction of the big swamp, increased to a gale. There was something ominous in its whistle as it swept through the house. The smoke rolled low over the clearing in great billows that soon blotted out the sun, and as we lighted the candles we saw the chickens going to roost as if it were evening.

In a few minutes Mother beckoned me from my restless wandering about the house. She drew me to one side and told me to get the root-cellar ready for occupancy; and then leaving Sis to watch over Bub for a moment, she took me through the cabin, pointing out the things she wanted taken with us. The family Bible, the medicine chest, the clock and a few books and heirlooms which she and Father had brought with them from 'York state.

"Hurry Son," she urged. "It is coming soon. God keep your father!"

Just as I had started to do as she bade me a neighbor rushed to the door with the tidings that the fire was at hand, borne on the gale and out-stripping it. He asked where Father was, and Mother told him with trembling lips.

He looked at us pityingly.

"Take to the root-cellar," he advised hurriedly. "Quick, for your lives. Don't worry about your man, he is safe in town by this time."

Then he was gone, away on his mission of warning.

"But Son," whispered Mother as we car-

ried Bub's cradle down into the root-cellar, "the town is in the path of the fire."

We kept the door of the root-house open as long as possible to give Bub what little air there was. But the heat everywhere was stifling. It seemed as if the whole world must be burning. And Bub's breathing was already becoming more labored in the close confinement of the underground room.

As I stood in the door-way watching for the first glare of the fire, for the awful immensity of what was to follow had carried us beyond the point where we were afraid, wild animals of the forest burst through the smoke and ran past me. Rabbits scurried by so near that I could have reached out and touched them. A bear came lumbering along, and by his side a huge buck.

I had liberated our cattle at the neighbor's suggestion and I supposed they had fled with the rest. Suddenly, as I stood there, I was startled to feel something soft and moist rub against the back of my neck, and a warm breath on my cheek. I turned and saw Molly, Mother's favorite cow, that she had brought with her from 'York state. I could not resist the plea that was in her mild eyes. I flung my arms about her neck and called to Mother and asked if we could not take her into the root-cellar with us.

"Yes Son," she said, "and I wish we had room for all the rest of them."

The animal followed me down the steps without fear and stood quietly where I tied

her.

Then with a roar and a crackle the fire was upon us. As I looked out for an instant before I shut the door it seemed as if the whole earth were ablaze. Sheets of flame swept through the air. I saw the tops of tall pines burst into waving torches. As I looked the cabin broke into a blazing mass. Then I shut the door in terror, and overhead sounded a sullen roar, pierced by the screams of animals and the dull boom of falling trees.

It was fearfully hot in the root-cellar. The door became so hot I could not touch it, and I dashed pails of water over it until it steamed.

Behind me Mother and Sis were caring for Bub. Now and then I could hear his wailing cry and his gasps as he fought weakly for breath in the smoke laden air of the room. I noted that his panting breaths were growing weaker, but I dared not leave the door. I heard Sis sobbing, and then Bob raised his voice in a cry for a drink. I turned with my pail of water, but Mother motioned me to stay where I was, and I saw her take a tin cup and stoop beside Molly, and I heard the tinkle of milk in the cup.

After the draught Bub gradually became quiet, though his breath still came in panting gasps, and Mother held up her finger and whispered that he was asleep.

I do not know just how long we staid in the root-cellar. It was only a few hours, although it seemed weeks. The roar of the

fire had long ago died away in the distance, but we could still hear the sound of falling trees, and for some time there was a crackling of flames near by.

At last Mother opened the door and a cloud of smoke rushed in and the cellar was filled with the rank smell of burned wood, but the fire was gone.

It must have been late afternoon. The clock had stopped when we carried it into the root-cellar, and the sun was still hidden from sight.

We mounted the steps and looked out upon a chaos of gaunt, naked desolation shrouded in ashes. Here and there about us were the seared carcasses of dead animals. We walked about among them aimlessly. For the miracle of our preservation we had no thought. Something had snapped our powers of comprehension.

As I looked out across what had been the clearing I saw a grotesque figure slowly coming toward us out of the film of smoke. It looked like a man and yet it was more than a man. I hid my face. I knew I could not believe my eyes. They had looked on too many awful things that day. I shrank from this new horror. But I heard a cry beside me and I looked up to see Mother running across the smoking waste toward the approaching object and as my eyes rested again upon this I saw that it was a man, half carrying, half dragging another man. My heart stood still, but I forced my unwilling legs to

send me after Mother. I saw her reach the two figures and saw her fling her arms around the one who was assisting his companion and I knew that it was Father.

He had brought the doctor with him. The younger man was exhausted by the fearful journey. Their clothing hung in smouldering rags and their faces were smoke-blackened and their beards and eye-brows were burned away.

We did not learn, however, until afterward the full meaning of these disfigurements and the task to which they bore witness: The wide detour to skirt the fire; the hours spent crawling forward on hands and knees, sometimes flat on their faces, to avoid the smoke; the cinders which lodged in their hair and beards and even in their eyes, forcing them to pluck hairs from the carcasses of dead animals to remove them before they destroyed the eye-sight.

These things we learned afterward, for Mother and Father were hurrying to the root-cellar, and Sis and I followed, turning our backs upon the destruction without to face the possibility of a new and far greater disaster.

As we stood in a group around the cradle the doctor made a hasty examination. Then he raised up and turned to Father.

"The child will get well!" He said.

HEMENWAY AND THE BOY JOHN

TWO messages came into the Sugar Island Life-saving Station in the middle of the December night. Almost at the same instant the bunk room on the second floor of the station house learned that a child had been born to Hemenway's wife down in the surfman's white-washed cottage, and that a vessel was on the outer reef.

The boy John brought the news of the birth of the child to the bunk room. In his eyes there was a wonder light and on his lips a smile. Big Jones was asleep in his bed over in the corner. He growled profanity when he was awakened by the tumult, but after he learned the import of the message he grinned and then turned over and went to sleep again. Sandys, tall and gaunt and stoop-shouldered, was sitting on the side of his bed doubled up in a paroxysm of coughing. He looked up, smiled wanly, and wiped the moisture from his eyes: "Good." He chuckled huskily. Red Allen emitted a whoop and leaped from his blankets and with two bounds, one of which he so timed that he landed on Big Jones, he cleared the intervening beds and reached the floor. He seized Parson Reynolds, deep in his devotional reading, and while Reynolds' book flew in one direction and his socks in another

he waltzed him around the floor.

Tidings of the wreck sent messengers hurrying through the storm for the patrols and for Hemenway, down in the cottage which had become a sanctuary.

In the bunk room there was a hurried scramble for warm clothing and heavy scarfs and mittens. One after another the men clattered down the stairs and the doors opened and shut and opened again as they plunged out from the light and warmth of the stoutly built station house into the driving snow. Soon lanterns were twinkling out on the snow-swept dock and hurrying men shouted hoarsely to each other, striving to make themselves heard above the shriek of the wind and the thunder of the surf on the shore.

Hemenway heard them and knew that something was afoot. He understood what it must be and as the voices sounded nearer he braced himself to meet the summons. When it came he nodded and then turned and went into the bed room. He spoke softly to the Captain's wife who was there and then he stepped to the side of the bed and leaned for a moment over his wife and his first born, then he tip-toed quietly from the room and out of the house, shutting the door gently behind him.

When Hemenway reached the dimly lighted boat house it was noisy with the confusion of hurried preparation. The gray haired captain nodded to him when he came

in and went on issuing quick sharp orders, his mind already busy outlining his report to the district superintendent. Hemenway slipped into his cork jacket and swung to his allotted tasks. Big Jones, the veteran of the crew, was beside him working swiftly and coolly and grumbling at the disturbance of his slumbers and at Red Allen, who was blithely whistling a two-step.

When all was ready they rolled the big life-boat down the ways. As they did so Red Allen, who was biding his time, contrived to send a dash of icy water over Jones. It drew a sharp reprimand from the captain and another burst of profanity from the victim. The rest of the crew grinned and even Hemenway's lips curved to a smile and Red Allen took his place abundantly satisfied.

Sandys muffled his woolen scarf closer about his throat and stepped into the boat and took his seat beside Reynolds, who sat silent, making his peace with his Creator while yet there was time, for Reynolds firmly believed that some time he was to go out with the boat and was not to come back.

The other followed Sandys and then the heavy doors swung back and they pushed out into the night.

A black swell lifted the life-boat up and away from the boat house. The oars swung upright and fell with a clatter between the thole pins. As the boat dipped to the swell they caught the water to Red Allen's shout and she climbed up and swung around on the

crest of a following wave. The boy, John, gripped his oar as he thrilled with the prospect of rescue and the thought of a girl and looked compassionately at Hemenway beside him, who could not forbear straining to catch a last glimpse of the lighted cottage as the life-boat gathered headway and pointed out into the storm.

It was a raging Northwester; and in the month of December on the Great Lakes that means also driving, stinging snow, that cuts like a knife and often becomes so dense that it is impossible to see the boat's length ahead.

Beyond the shelter of the point the gale burst upon them in its full fury. The snow squalls followed in quick succession, cloaking them in whirling, blinding clouds of white through which the only thing visible was the succession of black walls of water up which they mounted and the hissing, boiling, bubbling valleys between. When the air cleared for a moment their range of vision, circumscribed by the gloom, showed them a tumultuous waste in the midst of which their craft was tossing like a cork surrounded on all sides by driving walls of white.

The wind came down with a shriek and a wail contesting every foot of their passage. But the men were seasoned to such struggles and as the life-boat steadily made her way over the seas they swung forward and backward in perfect time with the regularity of a piston stroke. Like a machine, however,

their energy was made potent by the master hand that guided them. Upon the grating in the stern the gray haired captain clung to the tiller ropes and balanced himself, as he crouched, to the roll of the boat, now and then bowing his head in involuntary tribute to the power of the wind. He studied the advancing crests with a practiced eye, measured them and laid his course accordingly, heading directly into them when it was possible and when it was not, paying off to take them on the quarter, or even lying for an instant almost in the trough of the waves, but always making headway, creeping forward inch by inch and foot by foot toward the distant lights that occasional rifts in the storm revealed.

In most of the gales that sweep the lakes such tactics would have been successful, as he had found them a score of times before. But to-night there was a new force abroad which all the cunning of expert seamanship was powerless to overcome, and before they had been out half an hour the captain and the men below him straining at the oars felt its cruel relentlessness. The wind which swept over them was bitterly cold. As it whipped the crests from the seas and flung the spray and the fine snow down upon them like driving rain it turned it to ice, soon sheathing them in stiff, crackling coats that hampered their movements and oppressed them with the weight. The water they had shipped washed about in the bottom of the boat build-

ing up a floor of ice about their feet, for the self-bailers were frozen shut, and they had constantly to change positions to keep from freezing fast where they sat.

As they leaned forward to dig their oars into a hissing whirl of black waters Reynolds muttered to Sandys beside him, "It's no use Sandys. The time has come. Make yourself ready man."

Big Jones who had stretched his huge frame forward until his head topped Reynolds' shoulder heard the words. "Shut up and dig in you fool" he snarled, and he bent his oar until it creaked with the redoubled energy he put into his stroke to make up for any weakening in the seat ahead.

But the heavy life-boat was beginning to feel the weight of ice upon her and she responded sluggishly to the effort. The ice had also settled her lower into the water and she did not mount the seas as easily as she had done. Among the men the strain of lifting this added weight was beginning to tell; that and the chill which was creeping into their bodies. Probably Reynolds did not relax his efforts because of the foreboding expressed in his words to Sandys, but the boat began to lag as the sweep of the oars grew mechanical, until at last she barely held her own.

The captain felt the weakening stimulus. The knowledge of what it foreshadowed made him shiver, more than the chill which gripped his own limbs. He placed his feet

solidly wide apart and taking a firm grip on the tiller ropes he crouched until his face was on a level with the faces of the men on the rowing seats. Then he raised his voice in a shout that rang above the scream of the storm and lashed them with such sharp, cutting personal sentences as no Sugar Island life-saving crew had ever heard before. He brought all his stored up knowledge of their faults and weaknesses into play, goading them, urging them, commanding, appealing. Big Jones' gigantic efforts he ridiculed. He warned Red Allen with sharp insistence to focus the energy he was wasting. Sandys he encouraged. He plead with Reynolds on the hope of the heaven to which he looked. The words were electric with the vitality he strove to flash into their tired muscles. Only to Hemenway as he looked on the tense, drawn face in front of him did he speak softly.

The life-boat hung stationary a moment as if waiting the outcome of the effort. Then she lunged forward with a new impetus, flinging the seas from her in spray. But with the second stroke suddenly up in the bow an oar snapped. It was Red Allen's. They were mounting a long crested black comber. The boat rose heavily, veered and listed with the weight of water in her. Before they could recover the wave broke and in a twinkling they were over, floundering in the icy water as they struggled, half strangled, from beneath the upturned boat to grasp the ice

coated life-lines. And when they called to each other as the boat lifted them on the crest of the next sea they found that they were only eight, for the black cataract of water that had engulfed them had borne the gray haired captain with it out into the night to make a report he had not planned when he left the station dock.

The interval that followed has long since been written down in another Book and need not be repeated here; for the Providence that rules the December seas came and dwelt for a space upon the upturned boat and told them off one by one. Sandys, in the midst of a paroxysm of coughing, loosed his hold and dropped down out of sight. Up at the bow a twisting wave tore Red Allen from his hold and as he swept past Big Jones reached out to seize him, missed and sobbed like a child. Reynolds, whose forethought at last was to bear fruit, started a hymn and in the middle of it slipped down and the waters closed over him. One after another they fell away and the darkness gathered them up and they were no more.

At the last only Hemenway and the boy John remained, clinging to the lifeline side by side. Hemenway had seen the others disappear with a feeling of great sorrow and pity. When Sandys went there had come over him the thought that his fate ultimately must be the same. But he had flung it from him and set up in its place the image of his wife and his first born. It had given

him strength and as the others followed Sandys he had come to view their end as something so far removed that he could grieve for them. With the boy John it was somewhat different. The youth had been closer to him, drifting in and out of his home life until he had become a secondary part of it. So when he realized that they two were the only ones left he instinctively turned to the boy, for he felt the fatal lethargy gripping him and he needed strength. But he was not to get it there, for on the face of the boy John there was a look of exhaltation. He opened his mouth as if to speak to Hemenway, but the words did not come and the chilled lips could not shape themselves so Hemenway could understand. Hemenway instinctively put out his hand to aid him, but as he did so the boy's nerveless fingers loosed their hold and he was gone. And at the same instant Hemenway felt a mighty wrench at his hips that was like to tear him from his hold. All the pent up desire to live surged up within him. He yelled feebly with rage and despair and with desperate strength he tore himself free from the incumbrance and cast it from him into the sea. Then he fell back, weak and spent from his exertion and slowly into his benumbed consciousness there came the realization that it was the boy John that he had flung away from him. He called out pitifully to the seas and when they returned no answer he wept. But still he clung to the

life-line with what little strength remained. And the gray light of the new day that was dawning revealed the not far distant shore through rifts in the snow squalls.

But Hemenway was beyond adequate comprehension of what to do even had his will the strength remaining to answer his bidding. As he rose in the crest of a wave he gazed dully about him, and then suddenly there leaped to his eyes a gleam of life.

In the sea near him bending over an oar hung the form of the boy John. Hemenway's dazed consciousness cleared. With a weak, glad cry he pulled his hands free from the life-line and slipped down into the sea and a wave caught him up and bore him toward the oar.

It did not matter that a blinding snow squall came down just then and hid it from his sight; for, when the searching party from the station found the two bodies a few hours later frozen in the shallows, one of Hemenway's arms was wrapped about the oar and with the other he clasped the boy John.

PIERRE

JANUARY'S snow lay deep on the northern hills. The great clearings that in summer stretched away over miles of hill and plain, a dreary wilderness of fallen tree trunks and stumps and patches of scrub growth, were now vast, undulating fields of white, out of which the gaunt, gray boles of the dead timber rose in cold desolateness. The tamaracks bent under their fleecy loads and in the second growth every barren twig of birch and oak was cloaked with a sparkling ridge of white that waited but the slightest provocation to flurry down in a miniature snow storm. Under the jack-pines the fall had been lighter and here and there scraggly bushes rose through the drifts. The snow was flecked with needles and cones and bits of brush, while everywhere, crossing and recrossing and leading away under the trees were the tracks of the little denizens of the forest. Down in the swamp the swift flowing brook ran black between its banks of crystal. It never froze.

Altogether it was, as Johnson, the foreman at Wiley's camps, said, the best winter for getting out logs there had been around those parts in many years.

But Pierre, as he stood outside the bunk-house door that winter morning did not care

materially whether the big foreman got out any logs for the Company before the thaw. So far as Pierre was concerned the whole camp might follow its beloved logs into the creek when the ice went out with his full permission. In fact he might have been willing to assist a certain few members of the crew with a "leetle shove," which, in the camp, meant a kick, just to help them along. Pierre had his troubles and just now they were piled around him higher than the drifts against the cook-shanty wall.

Three years before Pierre had left the vineyards of his native France for the golden west. There was a girl, and she was to follow when Pierre had built and feathered the nest.

For two years and a half Pierre drifted about Canada, but in the third autumn there came to his ears tales of the big wages paid in the Michigan lumber camps, and Pierre was sorely in need of money. So it came that one day, late in autumn, he clambered down from the accommodation train into the garish lumbering village.

Guided by the foreman of Wiley's camps, who was at the station on the lookout for new men he shouldered his valise and trudged to the tote sleigh that was about to start.

The road led out of the village, across the clearings and into the great woods. It was a strange country to Pierre, fresh from the cultivated fields and well kept roads of

southern Canada. Sometimes they traveled through forests of norway and white pine; tall, straight trunks towering up without branch or foliage until they were lost in the murmuring canopy formed by their tufted crests. Again they descended the hills and crossed wide, frozen marshes level and barren as a desert, save for a clump of pines that rose like an oasis far out across the snow.

It was long after dark when they reached the camps and drove up to the long, low buildings half buried in the snow. Pierre was bundled into a big room filled with tobacco smoke. As his eyes cleared he made out a great stove in the center, and ranged along the two sides in long lines double tiers of bunks knocked together out of rough boards and filled with straw ticks and blankets. The room was filled with men in various stages of undress smoking and reading and talking.

The next morning Pierre was set to work with a gang of swampers making roads and clearing the branches from the felled trunks; and swamper he remained. It is the lowest round on the lumber-jack's ladder of promotion, but, try as he would, Pierre could not advance. Johnson said he was lazy. Possibly that was because the foreman had happened along one day when the other men were gone after water and found Pierre sitting on a stump looking at a picture which he carried under his shirt,

along with the crucifix. Johnson cursed him fervently; but Johnson was apt to be rash when it looked like breaking up.

However, the foreman was not Pierre's greatest trouble.

After supper the men always gathered in the bunk house to spend the evening as caprice dictated,—a stag dance, reading, games of cards and bed, or general sky-larking. With the result that it was more often the last named than the others. Freund, the "Big Dutchman," and "Fatty" Hamacher rejoiced in sky-larking and as they divided between them the supremacy of the camp their desires carried weight.

Pierre was let quite alone during his first week or two. But his turn came. He tried to take it good naturedly, but there were some conceptions of humor in the minds of his tormentors to which he could not become reconciled and the comic look of depreciation which his face wore when it followed the rest of him out of the bunk much against his will became a constant source of delight to the crew. Also, he was light and could be made to hit the roof with considerable force when they tossed him in a blanket. Connors, a stubby, bow legged Irishman with merry eyes sometimes interceded for him, but Connors' tears were from laughter, not pity, and the fun went on. Pierre bore it quietly, but he thought many things.

As the months went by and no answer to his letters came from Canada or France

he grew lonely. Then he tried to make himself feel that he did not care whether they wrote to him or not, for Pierre was young. There was more than one way of making money up here in the great woods and he determined to let them see that he could earn more money than they ever had thought of. But this thought did not console him for the silence of the girl. He grew to brooding over it and shunned the society of the crew.

At last he decided to cut the camp and with the money he had coming out of his "stake" to buy a rifle and a set of traps and to try his hand at trapping. There certainly was money in that. The old trapper who had come frequently to the camp to buy his supplies was always well supplied with it before he was murdered that night over on the Wolf creek road.

There seemed no other alternative. It was beyond hope that he ever should get the big blacks or the grays or in fact any other team in camp to drive and Johnson assured him with conviction that never in the world would he become skilful enough to be a top loader. So Pierre decided. He got his traps and supplies with the money that was coming to him and on this winter morning he stole out of the bunk house before the men were up, with the double purpose of getting an early start and escaping the chafing he knew that otherwise he must expect from the crew.

It was long before dawn. A few frosty stars twinkled sleepily and the old moon sailed far up in the sky, wan and cold from her winter night's vigil. The pale light filtered down through the big norways and lay with a chilly whiteness on the whiter snow.

Pierre started off down the iced log road dragging his sled of supplies. His destination was a set of old camps that lay about fifteen miles distant across the hills on the shore of the lake. There was no underbrush; just the open woods and the great trunks of the pine. Once he came to a windfall, where a heavy wind had swept through, uprooting and breaking the trees and twisting them together, forming an almost impassable barrier. He dragged his sled around it and kept on.

The moonlight began to fade and a gray light crept down through the branches. At last he climbed a long hill and came out on the edge of the pine. In the half light he looked down across a little runway that the deer took on their way to the lake. Opposite him lay a low hill covered by a grove of jack-pine; beyond was a wide plain, broken by patches of second growth and scattered stubs of dead timber, which stretched away to the eastward to where a black line marked another tract of pine and more hills.

As he stood there a faint pink color tinged the sky above the black line. Things grew more distinct. The pink changed to crimson and lay along the horizon in folds of

splendor. The scattered clouds that a moment before had looked cold and cheerless now floated like ships of opal on a sea of gold. The top of a glowing disk rose above the distant pines and dazzling sunbeams shot across the snow, burning the ice crystals and drifts into fields of sparkling diamonds and hurrying on to bury themselves deep in the great woods. A murmur rose in the branches overhead, and in an instant the world which had been so silent a moment before became animate with life. Another day had come to the hills.

Pierre cast one glance back in the direction of the camp and then started down the hill, jumping from side to side to keep from being run down by the loaded sleigh. When he came to a swamp he went around it, or hunted out an abandoned pole road on which the lumber men sent their cars of logs down to the lake in summer. In crossing the plains he often struck buried tote roads, the only evidence of whose existence was the cleared path winding away to the hills.

About the middle of the afternoon he came to the camps, grouped together in a clearing near the bank of the lake. There was nothing attractive in the buildings or their location. Some of them had been set on fire by wanton travelers and were partly burned. Others had been dismantled by squatters who wanted the material to put into their shanties. The office, however, was

still intact and here Pierre decided to locate. An old cook stove had been left inside for safe keeping and there were a couple of bunks, a table and some chairs. When Pierre got a roaring fire going and the contents of his turkey scattered around in a homelike way it made quite a respectable habitation. And he was alone!

Pierre was a novice at trapping. His first efforts, therefore, were not crowned with any great success. But once in a while he got a mink or a fox, and one never to be forgotten day he shot a bear in the swamp. He cut holes in the ice on the lake and occasionally speared a pike. It was an easy life, but a lonely one and he smoked much and looked at the picture hanging beside the crucifix still more.

One cold, gray day he started over the hills to look after some traps in a distant tract of pine. He took his sled along to carry back his catch. The weather had been threatening snow for several days. By the time he reached his traps the wind had risen and occasional flurries of snow swept down around him. As he turned back from the last trap, empty handed as he had come, he thought he heard some one calling, back in the timber. He stopped and listened. Soon it came again, faint and far away, the cry that nowhere more than in the great woods has the power to arrest and thrill with its ominous portent, "h-e-e-l-p!"

Pierre hesitated a moment and then gath-

ering his courage he turned and ran in the direction whence the cry had come, crashing through bushes and tangling his snow shoes in the dry shoots that stuck up through the snow, in his excited haste. As the occasional cry sounded nearer he cocked his gun and ran more cautiously. There was no telling what lay behind that distant clump of bushes. But when at last he peeped through it a very peaceful sight met his eye. Johnson, the camp foreman, lay in the snow at the base of a windfall swearing vigorously to himself. Pierre was reassured and he hastened to see what was wrong.

"Hello," he said as he approached Johnson, "what is?"

"Sprained ankle," said Johnson succinctly; "fell off the windfall."

The big foreman had been returning from a farm a few miles away and in climbing over the windfall he had slipped and fallen. The hasty examination which the two made showed he had twisted his ankle badly.

Pierre eased the swelling with snow and then at Johnson's direction he lifted the injured man on his sled. But what to do next was a question. It was snowing harder and his camp was miles away.

Johnson saw his uncertainty and said, "all right Pierre, go ahead. It ain't only four miles through the timber to the camps and I guess we c'n make it. I ain't so terrible heavy. And say, Pierre," he added, "there's a letter over there for you. It

came a couple of days ago and one of the boys was going to take it over Sunday."

Pierre's heart bounded. A letter! The loneliness of the winter slipped away from him. The letter would tell him every thing he longed to know. He must have it, and, incidentally he would take Johnson along. Johnson knew the way.

When the foreman had arranged himself in as comfortable a position as possible they started.

At first it was not very hard work. The sled slipped well and under the pines the snow was quite firm. So he hurried along as Johnson directed him.

But the snow came down thicker and faster. It whirled and eddied about him in clouds, still, Johnson was sure of his landmarks and they plowed on.

After a time the foreman grew drowsy and became uncertain in his directions. Pierre stopped and pounded him into consciousness. They were yet on the right track, but progress after that was slower. Pierre was forced to stop often to rouse Johnson and each time it was a harder task to waken him. The soft, new snow made progress more difficult and it was turning bitterly cold. Pierre's joints ached and grew numb. The snow-shoes were as heavy as lead. The rising wind stung him and took his breath, and the driving snow blinded him and he had continually to wipe it from his eyes like tears. He felt the desire to

hurry ebbing from him and his progress grew mechanical. It seemed to him that it must be drawing toward night-fall for he also was feeling drowsy. But he checked himself with the thought that that was the way people felt when they were freezing and that the letter was still unread. He stopped and pounded Johnson and himself to arouse the blood in his veins and again turned doggedly to his task. Johnson had ceased to give any sensible answer to his questions for direction so he went blindly ahead.

The storm grew more dense and his strength was spending itself in utter weariness with the weight of his burden, the thought of relinquishing which had never occurred to him. When progress was easy there had been no cause to think of leaving Johnson to his fate and now Pierre was beyond conception of the moral issue of the survival of the fittest. He had no thought save to struggle on through illimitable time and space, dragging his burden after him. Drowsiness was pressing down his eyelids with heavy, resistless weight that was not to be denied. His mind wandered from his task and the letter, across the winter seas to France. Then he recalled himself with an effort and plunged on, only to feel consciousness slipping, slipping away from him.

All at once he came out into a cleared space stretching in either direction off through the woods, just as he had pulled

himself together for a last desperate effort. On the other side was a long, high snow covered mound. It was a pile of logs on skidways. Pierre was thoroughly awake now. He looked at the mark on the butts. It was the familiar circle W. This was the ice road. Yonder, in one direction or the other lay the camps. But, which way?

The flicker of hope died. It was getting cold and dark again. He kicked Johnson savagely and then turned to the right and staggered on. His thoughts were playing truant again. He was in France, hurrying to see the girl. But he seemed to be stepping backward all the time. There were trees all about him and strange voices sounded in his ears. Ah! There were the lights, there she was waiting. It grew darker. The lights wavered and grew dim. He ran against something, and then came darkness.

When Pierre awoke he was lying in the bunk-house. Several men were standing around him. He was conscious of the stinging taste of whiskey and he saw one of them rubbing him with snow. He looked up and grinned feebly and held out his hand. Connors, who was standing beside him holding the whiskey bottle understood and reached into his pocket and drew forth a letter, and when he had given it to him Connors handed the bottle to "Fatty" Hamacher and turned away brushing his eyes with the back of his hand.

"Johnson?" whispered Pierre when he had the letter at last safely clutched in his fingers.

"Livin', thanks to you," growled Hamacher softly and Pierre nodded and turned over and went to sleep.

OUT OF THE NORTH

COCHRANE picked up his oil can and climbed down from the cab. Up the yard the switch lights glowed hazily through the slow autumn rain, and here and there the beams from blazing headlights flashed back from the sides of dripping box-cars and reached their bright fingers down the glistening wet rails.

A long freight was rattling in over the switches on the next track. As it gradually slowed, and came to a sudden stop with a bump and a clatter of couplings Cochrane glanced up carelessly from his oiling. On the night air a familiar odor was wafted across to him. He straightened up and lifted his torch high above his head. Its yellow rays struggled feebly through the misty gloom and by their unsteady flicker he saw tier above tier of wet logs decked high on the long flat car, and beyond, on either hand, a black bulk stretched away into the night.

Cochrane set his oil can down on the step of the cab and crossed to the other track. Reaching up he passed his hand along over the rough bark, muttering to himself as he did so. He flashed his torch down the length of the car and when he reached the end he climbed up on the coupling and examined the butts of the logs. Evidently he

found what he wanted, for beside one he stooped low and held his torch up close to the wood. Deeply imprinted in its surface was the outline of a single letter. He studied the mark intently for several minutes, scratching his head in a puzzled way, and then, apparently satisfied, he turned and sat down upon the log.

Somewhere, stowed away among the dusty annals of the roundhouse there is a tradition of how Cochrane came to the division. It has been told, even, up in the elegantly appointed offices, sacred to the powers that rule. But it is nevertheless the property of the round house, for there it was born, away back in the time when Kent was round house foreman.

The day had been unusually hot for September. Kent was busy with a gang of wipers in the round house when a sudden exclamation from one of the men attracted his attention. He looked in the direction the man pointed and there, framed in one of the big doorways stood Cochrane.

Nothing like him ever had invaded those precincts before. A rough slouch hat was on his head and a blue bandanna handkerchief was knotted about his throat, sailor wise. Over his arm he carried a Mackanaw jacket, a coat of many colors, a riotous mixture of tints lifted bodily from the rainbow, with here and there a dash of the sunset, all flung together with a sort of semi-regard for pattern. A small rope knotted

about his waist afforded the only visible means of support for a pair of worn corduroy trousers which had been cut off just below the knee; and his feet and legs were encased in a pair of heavy, laced river boots which reached up under the frayed bottoms of his trousers. The boots had been greased until they shone in the sun, and the soles were studded with steel caulks which rang against the rails as he walked.

He stood in the doorway a moment surveying the scene before him, then he walked over to Kent, paying no more attention to the stares of the men than as if they had not been there.

"I want to go to work," he announced briefly.

Kent looked him over curiously. "Know anything about this kind of work?" he asked.

"No, just came from the woods."

Kent was hot and tired and grouchy. "I suppose the first thing you want's an engine ain't it?" he asked sarcastically.

"Oh, hardly. Not yet," answered Cochrane with a grin. "But I will after a while."

Kent grinned also. "You'll do," he said dryly. "Go and take off that truck and get into something suitable and report here to me."

That is how Cochrane came to the division. It was a long while before he got his engine; but it came with time; switch engine, freight run and finally the A. and P. express,

PIERRE

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tramp the hills and plains for a day, and when night came to fall asleep on a bed of fragrant boughs lulled by the cries of the loon and the whip-poor-wills, nor to be awakened at day break by the clatter of traffic over the city pavement.

For Cochrane as he sat there the huge office building that reared its black bulk into the night on the other side of the fence became the hill by the lake, and he painted a fanciful picture to himself of a gloomy forest dripping with rain. He listened unconsciously to catch the familiar cry of a night prowler, and awakened out of his reverie with a start when a long drawn whistle came echoing down the yards.

Hurriedly he pulled out his watch and looked at it and slid to the ground. Torch in hand he hastened over to his engine and climbed into the cab. There was a hiss of escaping steam, a jerk and a rumble and the big engine backed slowly down the track to be coupled to the limited.

A few minutes later the long train of Pullmans rolled out from the glare of the station arc lamps and swung out into the gloom, speeding faster and faster down the long lanes of dripping cars, clattering over switches, hurrying toward the open country. As it swept past the waiting log train a boy in a slouch hat and a Mackinaw jacket who was peering from a window in the lookout turret of the caboose gazed for an instant into the eyes of the gray haired engineer sitting

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erect on his cushioned seat in the cab of the great on rushing locomotive, and in the breast of the boy a resolve was born. The North had sent another offering.

THE FULLBACK

THE fullback raised his nose-guard and swung it up to a rest against his forehead. He turned and let the chill November wind that swept across the field fan his heated face. It felt good, and what did he care that it was making twelve thousand persons in the living wall that bounded the four sides of the field huddle deeper among their wraps and slap their hands and stamp their feet gingerly on the board foot-rests. The only feeling that he had that was kin to theirs was impatience with the prostrate figure over whom the trainer was working near by. Not that he was insensible to pity; for he would have declared that he could "feel" as much as the next man. But he knew that this was a case where pity would have been out of place; that none was expected or wanted. So he walked about impatiently, counting the precious moments of day-light as they slipped away.

"Five minutes more to play," the captain murmured as he passed him, and he glanced down the field toward the white goal-posts standing out distinctly against the back ground of humanity; five, ten, fifteen—fifty yards to make; five minutes of play left and neither side with a score.

"We're pushing 'em," he replied grimly.

He turned toward the side of the field

nearest him. The substitutes his opponents had brought along were seated on a bench along the side-line which marked the base of an immense sloping wall of people, that was crested by a light hand-rail, drawn thread-like against the sky and from whose center rose a slender pole bearing a whipping banner. A band was playing. He could see its cluster of instruments glisten against the background of the human mass, over whose entire length and height were flecks and splashes of color. He smiled as he noted that several of the substitutes were missing from the bench and that their places were occupied by bruised and dirty regulars who sat hunched over, wrapped in blanket-ropes and overcoats.

A yell and a measured cheer broke out across the field behind him. He turned about and saw the player over whom the trainer had been working scramble to his feet; and immediately he lost all interest in the scene he had been watching.

"Fifty yards in five minutes," he repeated to himself as he pulled down his nose-guard.

He nodded to the look of appeal which the quarterback gave him as he hurried past and he bit his teeth deep into the soft rubber mouthpiece and ran back to his position.

The referee blew his whistle and ran out of the way.

Between his two halves the fullback crouched and leaned forward eagerly, one arm swung back, the outstretched fingers of

his other hand resting lightly on the ground and his feet placed well apart, scrupulously toeing an imaginary line. In front of him the quarterback volleyed four sharp, quick numbers and ducked down, and he lunged forward almost before the ball was passed; but the quarterback had it and jammed it viciously into the pit of his stomach as he sped by him and hurled himself into the narrow lane that opened for an instant before him in the low wall of backs and legs.

He stumbled over a prostrate form, and felt a pair of arms from behind steadying him. He staggered forward a few feet and swayed and sank down, hugged firmly in the grasp of two burly tacklers; but as he fell he hunched himself along and worked the ball up until it lay in the hollow of his neck.

When they pulled him to his feet he ran back to his position impatiently. "Only four yards," he muttered and clenched his fist; and the desire that in ages past had sent his savage ancestors forth to smite and slay surged up within him as he saw the worn, tired look on the faces of the men opposite him.

He thrilled with a fierce joy as he plunged around the end in the interference and doubled up his body and launched himself at a player who blocked his way and heard him go down with a grunt. He gloried in his strength as that compact little wedge of humanity of which he was the apex hurled itself into the line again and he struggled up

and over a soft, yielding pile of bodies and toiled on for a yard or two carrying a man who clung to him and sought to pull him down.

"We can't do it," panted the left-half as he ran back to position.

"Shut up and get into it," he snarled behind his nose-guard; for he heard a frenzied cry sweeping down from the stands where his opponents' supporters were;—a sharp, pleading cry, "ho-old 'em Varsity!" And he knew that the patched up line was yielding.

Again he lunged forward and the quarterback drove the ball into his arms and he hurled himself into the crouching line.

This time when the pile untangled itself he did not rise. Dimly he saw a man bending above him and felt a hand running over his body; then the mist before his eyes cleared away and he realized that he was delaying the game. He struggled to get on his feet, but restraining hands held him down. "Take all your time, old man," he heard the captain say quietly. "We need you."

So he lay there a few seconds longer, gathering his strength and trying to locate where the trouble was, for the lassitude of fatigue deadened the pain. Then they lifted him to his feet and he knew in an instant. When he put his right foot to the ground it seemed as if needles were run through his ankle and leg. The first few steps he took were agony; but he placed the foot firmly

on the ground. He stepped off without flinching and attempted a smile as they walked him about until the referee's whistle blew. Then the right half unfastened the strap by which his broken shin-guard hung and threw the now useless article far toward the side line and they trotted back to position. And a glad cheer rose from the stands that flaunted their colors.

After the cheer subsided the field became quiet, ominously so. The most unsophisticated spectator felt that a crucial moment was approaching and twelve thousand pairs of eyes were fixed intently upon the crouching group of players at one side of the long field.

The back-field trio squatted and leaned forward poised with a nicety that a touch would have disturbed. They eyed the quarterback as he stood with one hand resting on the hip of the stooping center, half turned toward them, regarding them for a second with feigned carelessness. Then suddenly he turned back as quick as a flash and dropped to receive the ball, and they were off.

Around the struggling mass of arms and legs the interference circled in a last desperate effort to score; between lunging opponents; staggering over huddled forms, flung before it in a final effort to stop its course; stumbling, butting, twisting—its members going down, one after the other until the fleeing left half with the ball was without a

protector.

The fullback running in the thick of it felt a sudden shock from behind and as he strove to recover himself his right leg gave way and he pitched headlong.

He scrambled to his feet, only to see the man with the ball, who was running and dodging through a broken field, suddenly crumple down like paper under the impact of a form that launched itself swiftly through the air at him. Then he fell back with an involuntary groan.

But although his ankle was paining him excruciatingly he got to his feet again and limped over to where the referee knelt above the ball.

He saw that in spite of the spectacular run they had made barely ten yards. The only gain seemed to be that they were nearer the middle of the field. He knew what this meant as his eye gauged the distance yet to be traversed and he pulled off his nose-guard and flung it away. As he did so the quarterback flashed a look at him which said "You have got to do it. Can you?" And for answer he limped back several paces.

The multitude about the field became quiet and he concentrated all his faculties upon the task before him. He put firmly away the desire to meet the intense gaze of twelve thousand pairs of eyes and he did not think of the result that lay in his keeping. Only one digression he allowed himself as he guided the mechanical action of trained mus-

cles;—the resolution that pain and weariness must be put away now.

The preparations for the try for a goal from the field went with the precision of clock-work. The quarterback scurried back and knelt in front of him. He nodded and the quarterback opened his hands and the ball came sailing slowly back, a perfect pass, and alighted squarely in them. The quarterback dropped the ball, point upward, to the ground and held it there; and in the fraction of a second which followed,—it seemed to the twelve thousand like an age—he summoned all the strength that was in him and sent it surging into his right leg, measured the distance again with a quick glance, took two steps forward and swung; and the toe of his cleated shoe struck the ball fairly and strong and it sailed away in a long curve, upward and onward.

The fullback had been practicing four years for that kick and as he followed the ball's course with his eyes for an instant before the opposing line-man struck him and sent him rolling he knew that the impetus he had given it would send it true.

As he picked himself up a wild cheer broke from the massed stand behind the goal posts, a cheer that was taken up and swelled by thousands of throats and sent rolling like a mighty tide across the field. The air above the frenzied spectators in the stands was filled with flying hats and canes, and for the moment the fullback forgot the pain and

the feeling of being unutterably weary in a sense of satisfaction that caused him to chuckle when the little quarterback ran up, with tears in his eyes, and wrung his hand. "Cheer up pee-wee," he said, "You look like a mud-pie kid crying for the moon."

In the midst of the confusion the referee's whistle sounded shrilly and the game was over and the fullback submitted humorously as the crowd around him lifted him on their shoulders and bore him with the rest of the team toward the players' entrance while the multitude behind on the field chanted his name over and over at the end of the college yell.

In the steaming locker room of the gymnasium he submitted to another round of congratulations. In the midst of it he managed to get a shower bath and to have his ankle bathed and bandaged. Then he escaped with a breath of relief through a side door and out into the crisp autumn twilight.

The bath and the rubbing had revived him wonderfully and he breathed in deep draughts of the pure night air and swung away across the campus with a springing step in which the limp was hardly noticeable.

At the corner of the campus a knot of youths was singing the rollicking chorus of the Stein song. He smiled as he stopped and joined the group about them. He saw the quarterback leaning against a tree and shouldered his way over to him. "Great medicine, pee-wee," he said as he joined vig-